

fb Dubs 2/21/80 Death
CONFIDENTIAL

84

(R)

KABUL - SECURITY SITUATION

Question: What was the security situation in Kabul prior to Ambassador Dubs' kidnapping and killing on February 14, 1979?

Answer:

-- Although there was a growing insurrection in the countryside well outside of Kabul, there was little evidence of terrorist or insurgence activity in Kabul. During the six months prior to Ambassador Dubs' kidnapping, there had been two bomb explosions in the city but neither of these had been directed against U.S. installations. Additionally, the city was heavily patrolled by Afghan police and military security forces.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY *McQuinn* DATE *3-13-81*
EDS/IC KDC/EXT. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DETERMINED ☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - DIRECT THREATS AGAINST DUBS

Question: Was there any direct threat against Ambassador Dubs?

Answer:

-- No. There had never been a direct threat against Ambassador Dubs. Approximately a year prior to the attack against Ambassador Dubs, a threatening letter had been received at the Embassy. The letter was very general in content. However, following the receipt of the threat, Ambassador Elliot met with appropriate Afghan officials and Embassy officers to evaluate the security situation. Additional security was arranged for the residences of senior American officials, alert procedures were effected for the Marine Guard force, all American local employees were briefed on the threat and advised to take precautions. The Afghan Government provided additional police sentries for American installations. An armed detail of Afghan police in a follow car was assigned to Ambassador Elliot. Over the year there were no additional threats and security measures taken in response to the threat were reduced.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - ATTACK ON AMBASSADOR DUBS

Question: Is there any discernible connection between the threat received March 1978 and the attack on Ambassador Dubs on February 14, 1979?

Answer:

-- No. There is no information available to indicate any connection between these two incidents.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - SECURITY REDUCED

Question: Was security reduced after Ambassador Elliot's departure and Ambassador Dubs' arrival in Kabul?

Answer:

-- Yes. Security was reduced as a result of a lack of any hard information concerning a threat against Ambassador Dubs. Also, the overthrow of the Doud Government in April 1978 resulted in increased security throughout Kabul. Afghan security personnel were extremely visible throughout the city. At the time of the attack against Ambassador Dubs, there were Afghan security officers stationed outside of his residence and also outside of the Chancery building.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - AMBASSADOR DUBS BODYGUARD

Question: When Ambassador Dubs was kidnapped, did he have a bodyguard and a protective follow car?

Answer:

-- No. On February 14 when Ambassador Dubs was abducted, he was travelling alone in his chauffeur driver automobile enroute from his residence to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. The Ambassador did not normally have personal bodyguard protection while travelling in his vehicle, and except for the Soviet Ambassador, none of the Ambassadors in the diplomatic corps considered it necessary. The official vehicle in which the Ambassador was riding was partially armored and afforded a degree of protection from small arms weapon fire. The Ambassador's chauffeur had been instructed in defensive driving techniques and routinely varied his routes while transporting the Ambassador.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - AMBASSADOR DUBS' KIDNAPPED

Question: Under what circumstances was Ambassador Dubs kidnapped?

Answer:

-- On February 14, 1979 Ambassador Dubs was abducted while travelling alone in his chauffeur driven automobile enroute from his residence to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Shortly after departure from the residence, the Ambassador's automobile was motioned to stop by an individual dressed as a traffic policeman. The individual asked to search the automobile, stating he was under orders from the Afghan government. After a brief conversation the Ambassador agreed to the examination of the vehicle. While making the search the police officer produced a small hand gun, and ordered the chauffeur not to move. Immediately thereafter, three individuals dressed in civilian clothes appeared on the scene. One of these was also armed. Four individuals forced their way into the Ambassador's vehicle and compelled the chauffeur to drive at gunpoint the short distance to the Kabul hotel. Upon arriving at the Kabul hotel, the Ambassador was taken by his captives to the hotel and held hostage on the second floor in room 117. The chauffeur was instructed by one of the terrorists to inform

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

the U.S. Embassy of the abduction.

-- Upon being advised the Ambassador had been abducted, the U.S. Embassy officials promptly notified the appropriate Afghan authorities. In the meantime, three Embassy officers and one Foreign Service national employee immediately departed for the Kabul hotel arriving minutes later. During the course of the next several hours, a total of nine U.S. Embassy officers were present at the hotel. Immediately after the arrival of the first U.S. Embassy officer, a small group of Afghan police officials arrived to be eventually followed by a large number of Afghan police and military officials. Shortly thereafter more Soviets arrived, two of whom were identified as officials of the Soviet Embassy. Because of their activities with the Afghan police on the scene it was believed the Soviets were police advisers.

-- During the course of the next several hours U. S. Embassy officers repeatedly urged restraint on the part of the DRA security authorities and the Soviet advisers in dealing with the situation. Efforts on the part of U.S. officials to gain information as to the terrorist demands, the DRA plan of action and other relevant circumstances pertaining to the Ambassador's abduction were, for the most

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

part, ignored. In spite of the oft repeated U.S. Government request that no precipitous action be taken that might endanger the life of Ambassador Dubs, Afghan authorities prepared for and executed an assault on the room in which the Ambassador was being held - upon entering the hotel room shortly after the assault American officers discovered the body of Ambassador Dubs. A few minutes later Ambassador Dubs was pronounced dead by the Embassy medical officer.

-- In the immediate aftermath of Ambassador Dubs' death, the U.S. Department of State initiated an investigation into the circumstances of the incident. It should be noted that this investigation was severely hampered by the unwillingness of the Afghan police and security officials to provide even basic investigative data. Only marginal assistance was provided during the entire investigation. This investigation has been completed and will be made available to interested Congressional groups.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - ESCORT FOR AMBASSADOR DUBS

Question: At a February 19, 1979 press conference, the then Afghan Deputy Prime Minister Amin stated that Afghan Security authorities had suggested to U.S. Embassy prior to the incident that police cars escort the Ambassador's vehicle.

Answer:

-- On no occasion during Ambassador Dubs assignment to Kabul had the DRA formally offered to provide the Ambassador with a daily police escort.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR

Question: In the Jack Anderson article of January 24, 1980, there is the allegation that U.S. Embassy officials made no attempt to contact the Russian Ambassador in Afghanistan who might have been able to provide assistance. Was there any attempt to contact the Russian Ambassador?

Answer:

-- No. From approximately 0850 hours to 1250 hours on February 14, the American Embassy requested assistance from appropriate DRA authorities. Numerous U.S. Embassy officials were dispatched to the scene, both to provide assistance to the Afghan authorities and to insure that any action taken was in the best interests of securing the safe release of Ambassador Dubs. American officials present at the Embassy, at the Kabul hotel and at the Interior Ministry repeatedly urged that no action be taken which would endanger the life of Ambassador Dubs and stressed the need for patient negotiations with the terrorists. The U. S. Government's position was clearly understood by the Afghan authorities and by Soviet officials at the hotel. Repeated efforts by the American officers to dissuade the authorities from taking precipitous action were unsuccessful. It was apparent that the authorities at the hotel were under the control of senior DRA officials who were not present. At one point the Commandant of Police Sayed Doud

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Taroon informed the senior U.S. Embassy officials that the DRA had no intention of breaking into the room by force and thereby jeopardizing the safety of the Ambassador. Similar assurances were given by Deputy Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost.

-- However, at 1250 hours, DRA security forces, without prior consultation or approval of U.S. Embassy officials initiated an assault on room 117 which resulted in the death of Ambassador Dubs.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

KABUL - ATTACK ON HOTEL ROOM

Question: Do you believe that, had the Soviet Ambassador been contacted, his intervention could have prevented the attack on the hotel room?

Answer:

-- It's impossible to accurately speculate on that question. However, there were Soviet advisers on the scene who apparently had varying degrees of influence on the Afghan security forces. To the best of our knowledge, the decision to assault was made by the Afghan Government in spite of repeated requests from U.S. officials at both the Embassy and Washington level that this not be done. Any further questions on this matter should be raised in the context of the entire investigation into the kidnapping and killing of Ambassador Dubs which we will be making available as required.

CONFIDENTIAL